

**STATE OF WISCONSIN WISCONSIN TECHNICAL
COLLEGE SYSTEM**

AGENCY PRIMER: “WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW”

JANUARY 2023



**INSTITUTE FOR
REFORMING GOVERNMENT**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FROM THE DESK OF CJ SZAFIR	2
REPORT SUMMARY	3
BACKGROUND	4
AGENCY DESCRIPTION, MISSION, & FUNCTION	6
AGENCY BUDGET TRENDS	8
AGENCY LEADERSHIP	9
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART	10
ATTACHED COUNCILS, TASK FORCES, COMMITTEES	11
MAJOR PAST INITIATIVES (2011-Present)	12
GOVERNMENT REFORM OPPORTUNITIES	14
CONCLUSION	15

FROM THE DESK OF CJ SZAFIR

Freedom and Opportunity. Those are ideals that bind us together as a state. Unfortunately, the size and scope of state government too often gets in the way of individuals and families being able to achieve their full potential as they build their share of the American Dream.

We can do better, and we must do better. We all should ask, – “Is the mission of state government, — of each and every agency, bureau, and division —, aligned with the vision that everyday Wisconsinites have for Wisconsin? Is state government set up to help citizens succeed, or is it a roadblock to success? We need a conservative vision for state government, indeed for each and every agency.

Last spring, with support from our donors and Board of Directors, the Institute for Reforming Government started an ambitious project to help answer those questions about the biggest state agencies to help answer those questions because we believe the best way to enhance liberty is to improve transparency. This project was the work of eight experts in Wisconsin state government, including three senior-level cabinet officials, a budget director, and subject matter experts. In addition, our team had regular meetings with former top officials in state government as well as business leaders and other experts outside of government. We looked at past revenue and spending trends. The findings are not surprising.

State agencies are massive. They spend record amounts of taxpayer dollars year over year. They too often get in the way of individual success and are set up as enforcement agents instead of partners in creating a better Wisconsin. They need reform. We need leaders to bring forward conservative visions to the agencies.

In these briefings, we shine light onto state agencies to help all citizens diagnose what is broken. Later, based on these and discussions with people all over Wisconsin, we'll offer government reform ideas and detailed budget analysis to help chart a new course for Wisconsin, - one where each and every individual in our state has the freedom and opportunity to succeed.

Sincerely,

CJ Szafir
President
Institute for Reforming Government

SUMMARY

“Light and liberty go together”

Thomas Jefferson, In a letter to Tench Coxe, 1795”

This document prepared by the Institute for Reforming Government (IRG) is intended to inform policy makers and the public of the full scope of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). Our partners at the IRG Action Fund will release conservative, free market, and liberty minded policy reforms specifically for WTCS in a separate document.

For the general public, the executive branch of Wisconsin state government can be a mystery. There are countless agencies with billions of tax dollars flowing through them. Although some may have an understanding of an agency because of their daily work or real-world experience, few people in Wisconsin have a handle on the entirety of the executive branch. Each agency has its own mission, functions, and programs. Some agencies generate their own revenue, some rely on state tax dollars, and many of them take some sort of federal funding. Each agency has unique powers and authorities. The goal of this briefing document is to pull back the veil and show Wisconsinites how their government taxes, spends, and regulates.

Over the course of months, a team of policy experts at IRG pored over all of the information on Wisconsin's biggest agencies. In this briefing document, you will see agency functions, budget trends, a list of past appointees, and policy concerns. These items create a basis for understanding the scope and history of each agency in an effort to inform policy makers in Madison as they carry out their work in the coming legislative session.

The department's budget in 2021-2023 was set at \$1.2 billion which supports the operation of 16 main campuses with over 270,000 students statewide. The Technical Colleges are funded with a unique combination of state and federal funds, tuition, and local property taxes determined by each Technical College District Board. As Wisconsin continues to face workforce shortages, particularly in manufacturing and in the trades, an efficient and effective technical college system is necessary for economic growth.



Wisconsin has been a leader in vocational training since the early 20th century. In 1907, a state law was passed that allowed school districts or local boards to operate vocational education programs. In 1911, a state law provided funding and required communities with more than 5,000 people to establish an industrial education board with levy authority. This law made Wisconsin the first state to provide public funding for vocational education. In 1917, Congress passed legislation to promote vocational education in a way that modeled the Wisconsin system. The state then created the State Board of Vocational Education only to change the name in 1937 to the State Board of Vocational and Adult Education.

In the 1960s, the state reorganized vocational education creating the current district system and the State Board of Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education (VTAE). In 1993 VTAE was renamed the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) and the VTAE schools in the districts became technical colleges. Today, WTCS provides both full time and part time programs:

Full-time programs:

- Collegiate Transfer
 - A two-year program in which the liberal arts credits may be transferred to a four-year university. In 2019-20, five districts offered this program (Chippewa Valley, Madison, Milwaukee, Nicolet and Western).
- Associate Degree
 - A two-year degree program.
- Technical Diploma
 - A one- or two-year program.
- Registered Apprenticeships
 - A combination of between two to five years of on-the-job training and classroom instruction.

Part-time programs:

- A variety of courses and programs that consist of vocational-adult training, basic skills education, community services, hobby courses and community group courses.

The Wisconsin Technical College System offers over 500 programs and has roughly 270,000 students enroll every year.

WTCS Districts

District Name	Main Campus	Counties Wholly or Partially Included Within District
Blackhawk	Janesville	Green, Rock
Chippewa Valley	Eau Claire	Buffalo, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, Pepin, Pierce, St. Croix, Taylor, Trempealeau
Fox Valley	Appleton	Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago
Gateway	Kenosha	Kenosha, Racine, Walworth
Lakeshore	Cleveland	Calumet, Manitowoc, Ozaukee, Sheboygan
Madison	Madison	Adams, Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Juneau, Marquette, Richland, Rock, Sauk
Milwaukee	Milwaukee	Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, Waukesha
Moraine Park	Fond du Lac	Calumet, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette, Sheboygan, Washington, Waushara, Winnebago
Mid-State	Wisconsin Rapids	Adams, Clark, Jackson, Juneau, Marathon, Portage, Waushara, Wood
Nicolet	Rhineland	Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, Vilas
Northcentral	Wausau	Clark, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Menominee, Portage, Price, Shawano, Taylor, Waupaca
Northeast	Green Bay	Brown, Door, Florence, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Oconto, Shawano, Outagamie
Southwest	Fennimore	Crawford, Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, Richland, Sauk, Vernon
Waukesha	Pewaukee	Dodge, Jefferson, Racine, Waukesha
Western	La Crosse	Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Trempealeau, Vernon
Indianhead	Shell Lake	Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Polk, Rusk, St. Croix, Sawyer, Washburn

This list was taken from the Legislative Fiscal Bureau Information Paper “Wisconsin Technical College System” prepared by Christa Pugh, Legislative Fiscal Bureau, State of Wisconsin, January 2021



AGENCY DESCRIPTION, MISSION, & FUNCTION

Information in this section was pulled directly from public sources on the Department of Administration, Legislative Fiscal Bureau, and Wisconsin Technical College System websites.

Agency Description

The system board is the coordinating agency for the state Technical College System. The Governor appoints 10 members of the 13-member board with the advice and consent of the Senate. Three additional members (the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, a member of the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents, and the secretary of the Department of Workforce Development), serve in an ex officio capacity. The board appoints a System President to administer the agency. Two divisions administer the agency's programs. The board establishes statewide policies and standards for the educational programs and services provided by the 16 technical college districts that cover the entire state. Each nine-member, locally appointed district board is responsible for the direct operation of its respective school and programs and for hiring a District President.

Mission

The mission of the system is to enable eligible people to acquire the occupational skills training necessary for full participation in the workforce by stressing job training and retraining, and recognizing the rapidly changing educational needs of the citizens of the state to keep current with the demands of the workplace.

Function

The Wisconsin Technical College System is authorized by Wisconsin State Statutes Chapter 38 its functions are carried out by its two divisions and one office and is governed by the Wisconsin Technical College System Board:

Office of Policy and Government Relations

This office is responsible for system wide policy development, public relations, and state and federal relations. It also performs budgeting and research for the system.

Division of Finance and Administration

This division is responsible for the system operations including accounting, budget and finance, procurement, human resources, facilities, and information technology. It also distributes state aid and determines tuition and fees.

Division of Teaching and Learning

This division has responsibility for program development and approval. This division determines what will be taught in the technical colleges and how it will be evaluated.

Wisconsin Technical College System Board

The Board is responsible for hiring a System President, developing and overseeing educational and training programs and courses, distributing state aid to districts, setting tuition and fees for students, and setting system wide procedures for human resources, finance, and operational regulations.

Its 13 Members must include:

- An employer
- An employee
- A farmer
- The State Superintendent of Public Instruction or their designee
- The Secretary of Workforce Development or their designee
- The President of the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents, or their designee from among the Regents
- Six public members
- A WTCS student

The WTCS is divided into 16 Districts throughout the state. Each District has a board with taxing authority. The largest District, the Milwaukee Area, has over 10,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students, while the smallest, Nicolet Area, has 821 FTE students. There are over 64,000 FTE students statewide.



AGENCY BUDGET TRENDS

The state budget process begins in September of every even year when each agency sends its budget requests to the Department of Administration. The Governor then has several months to put together the executive budget proposal that is forwarded to the Legislature. The Legislature, through the work of the Joint Finance Committee, then holds hearings and votes on the budget through the spring and summer of the odd year. This culminates with the signing of the budget document that summer. While technically due by July 1 of the budget year, often budget debates will drag into the summer and sometimes the fall. However, the government does not shut down in Wisconsin as it does at the federal level when there is a budget impasse. It simply continues on the current spending plan until a new budget is adopted.

The WTCS budget has remained relatively stable over the past three budget cycles:

Agency Budget Trend

Fund	2017 ACT 59	2019 ACT 9	2021 ACT 58
GPR	\$1,039,032,600	\$1,064,524,600	\$1,145,674,600
FED	\$65,618,500	\$66,012,200	\$66,544,200
PR	\$9,500,600	\$9,253,200	\$9,410,600
SEG			
TOTAL	\$1,114,151,700	\$1,139,790,000	\$1,221,629,400

FTE Position Summary

Fund	2017 ACT 59	2019 ACT 9	2021 ACT 58
GPR	23.25	23.25	23.25
FED	26.75	26.75	26.75
PR	5	5	5
SEG			
TOTAL	55	55	55

AGENCY LEADERSHIP

The Wisconsin Technical College System is governed by the Technical College System Board (see description on page 7). The Board appoints the system president to serve at the pleasure of the board. The system president then appoints her leadership team. Below is a list of the current appointees at the Technical College System.

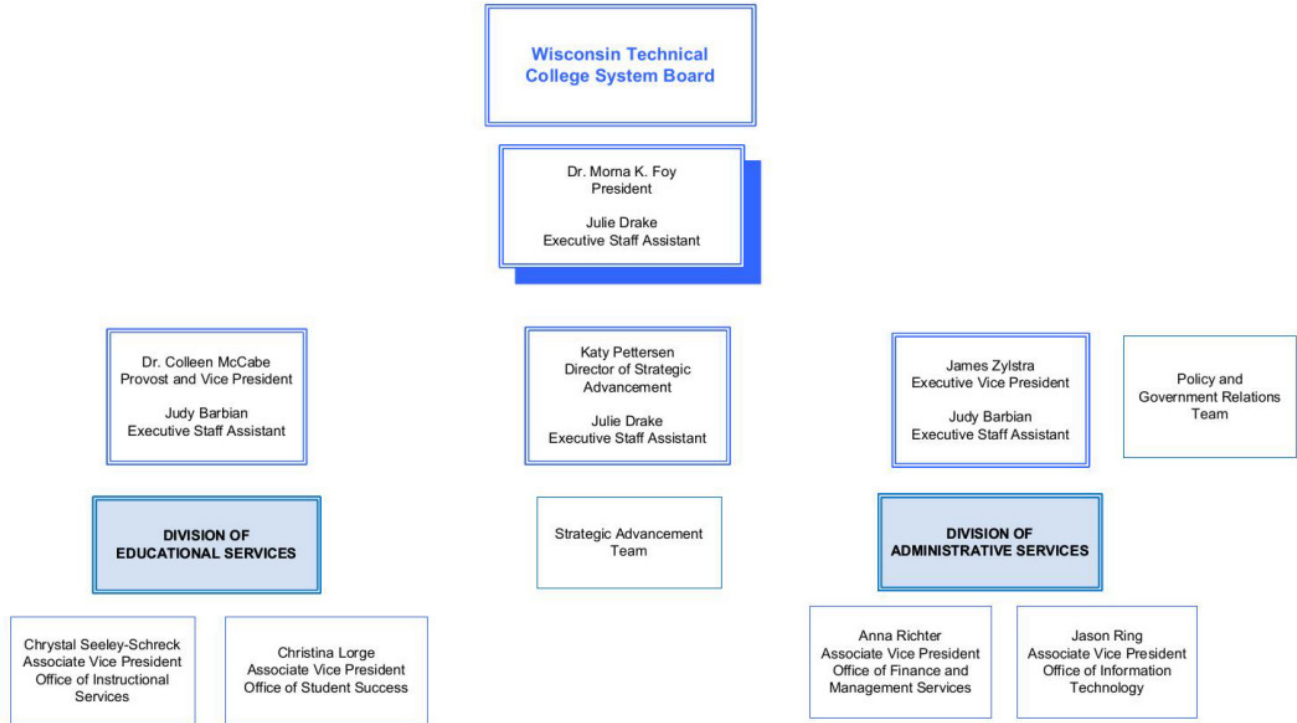
Agency Leadership

POSITION	
President	Morna Foy
Provost and Vice President, Educational Services	Colleen McCabe
Executive Vice President	James Zylstra
Policy Advisor	Megan Stritchko
Associate Vice President, Instruction	Chrystal Seely-Schreck
Associate Vice President, Office of Finance and Management Services	Anna Richter
Associate Vice President	Jason Ring
Associate Vice President, Student Success	Christina Lorge



ORGANIZATION CHART

Executive Team



ATTACHED COUNCILS, TASK FORCES, & COMMITTEES

Wisconsin Technical College System District Boards

The 16 districts of the Wisconsin Technical College System all have boards that oversee technical colleges within the district. Members are appointed by a committee of County Board Chairs within the district in 13 of the districts. Two district boards, Southwest and Fox Valley, are appointed by a committee of School Board Presidents in the district. In Milwaukee, the board is appointed by the Milwaukee County Executive and the Chairpersons of the Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Washington county boards.

General Board Membership Requirements

Each WTCS district is governed by a nine member board with the following representatives serving staggered, three-year terms:

- Two employers
- Two employees
- Three public members
- School district administrator
- State or local elected official

Additional Milwaukee District Board Membership Requirements

The Milwaukee district board has slightly different membership requirements. At least seven of the nine members must be Milwaukee county residents. Additionally, five members must represent employers, three of these must come from an employer with 15 or more employees, and two must be from employers with 100 or more employees. At least two of the employers must be from a business engaged in manufacturing. The employer representative is required to have at least two years of experience managing a business, nonprofit organization, credit union, or cooperative association with at least 15 employees or at least two years of experience managing the finances or hiring of a business, nonprofit organization, credit union, or cooperative association with at least 100 employees. The board must also have one school district administrator, one state or local elected official, and two public members.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Board

The board has responsibilities that are similar to how a K-12 school board operates. It hires the district president and other staff, determines curriculum and courses to be offered, develops a budget, sets the property tax levy, purchases services for the district and manages the buildings and other property of the district.



MAJOR PAST INITIATIVES (2011-Present)

Most major policy initiatives happen during the budget process. The Governor or the Legislature will propose major changes in spending or policy for any number of programs. The major initiatives dating from 2011 to the present for the Wisconsin Technical College System are listed below:

Major Past Initiatives

INITIATIVE	GOVERNOR	ENACTED	NOTES
Limiting District Board levy authority (2011-2013)	Walker	Yes	Modified by JFC
Reduced general funding in 2011-2013 budget	Walker	Yes	
Repeal nonresident tuition exemptions for undocumented persons	Walker	Yes	
Performance based allocation of state aid funding	Walker	Yes	Modified by JFC, partial veto by Governor Walker
Consolidate district board grants	Walker	Yes	Modified by JFC
Limit District Board levy authority (2013-2015)	Walker	Yes	Modified by JFC
Require WTCS and UWS to allow general education credits transfer	Walker	Yes	Modified by JFC
Move WTCS into shared services (including IT services) with DOA	Walker	Yes	Deleted by JFC
Tuition freeze for high demand fields	Walker	No	Deleted by JFC as non-fiscal policy
Eliminated Educational Approval Board (2015-2017)	Walker	No	Deleted by JFC

Tuition and fee freeze	Walker	No	Deleted by JFC
Allow District Boards to charge less tuition to in-district students	Walker	No	Deleted by JFC as non-fiscal policy
Annual accountability report to the Governor and Legislature	Walker	No	Deleted by JFC as non-fiscal policy
Eliminated Educational Approval Board (2017-2019)	Walker	No	JFC modified to move board to DSPS, Governor partially vetoed. Result is that the board was eliminated, but the functions were moved to DSPS.
Increase revenue limit	Evers	No	Deleted by JFC
Modify dual enrollment	Evers	No	Deleted by JFC
Resident tuition for undocumented persons	Evers	No	Deleted by JFC
Increase funding from state with corresponding decrease in property taxes	Legisla- ture	Yes	



GOVERNMENT REFORM OPPORTUNITIES

Wisconsin government has grown too big and too expensive. This has precipitated issues across the whole of the executive branch that have become a barrier to the success of Wisconsin residents and businesses alike. The Institute for Reforming Government endeavors to shine light on these issues as prime opportunities for bold reform. Below you will find a non-exhaustive list of policy concerns that we have highlighted for the Wisconsin Technical College System.

Property Tax Levy

Technical college district boards, like school district boards, have the authority to collect property tax to fund district operations. However, technical college boards are made up of unelected appointees that are not accountable to the residents of the district. This creates an environment where the voters of the district are unable to hold board members accountable for their decisions. This disconnect with the electorate can become an issue. Apart from solving the issue of accountability, lawmakers should explore all options for increased efficiencies, alternative funding models, and reduced spending that can lower property taxes.

Workforce Needs

The Technical College System has its roots in the early 20th century idea of industrial training. For too long, the state has been battling the skills gap, or the inability to match young people coming into the workforce with the skills they need for the jobs that are available. This problem has not been solved and there is still a labor shortage in many areas of the economy. Technical colleges must work closely with employers, the UW system, and economists to improve course offerings to reflect the needs of the state's economy and anticipate future worker training requirements.

Coordinating with UW System

The UW System and Technical College System will offer similar courses but the two systems should work together to avoid offering duplicate programs. This should be matched with making it easier to transfer credits between the two systems. This will allow students to graduate faster and with less debt.

CONCLUSION

At the Institute for Reforming Government, we know that the government isn't the way of the future - people are. And we believe that in order to empower people and for ideas to flourish, our government needs to get out of the way.

This is nothing new for Wisconsinites. We have a long history as the standard bearer for government reform. We were the first state to implement unemployment insurance, Wisconsin Works, and sustained school vouchers, and we were on the cutting edge of major collective bargaining reform. But today the state we love is beginning to lag behind. Our executive branch has become bloated, slow, and expensive, - a burden to the state's economy instead of a catalyst.

The solution to this problem isn't more government, it's less. What we need is a conservative vision for the state. This introductory document lays bare the issues and problems that are standing in the way of Wisconsin. In the coming months, IRG will release a series of reforms that will cast a conservative vision for key executive branch agencies in the state. Now is the time to renew our faith in the people of Wisconsin to drive prosperity, not the government.

